



Chesapeake Bay Program

Chesapeake Executive Council

OCTOBER 10, 1996

Adoption Statement on Riparian Forest Buffers

In past commitments, we agreed to reduce nutrients, to restore habitat, to improve access to thousands of miles of habitat for migratory fish, and to enhance watershed management by developing and implementing tributary-specific pollution reduction strategies. All of these are part of the effort to achieve our goals for improved water quality and living resources in the Chesapeake Bay. Building on these past commitments, we now highlight the role that conservation, restoration, and stewardship of our riparian areas, and in particular riparian forests, play in reaching our long-term goals for restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Based on Recognition That Riparian Forest Buffers Can Provide a Range of Water Quality, Living Resource, and Watershed Benefits:

- In October of 1994, the Chesapeake Executive Council adopted [Directive 94-1](#) which called upon the Chesapeake Bay Program to develop a policy which would enhance riparian stewardship and efforts to conserve and restore riparian forest buffers.
- The Executive Council appointed and convened a 31-member [Riparian Forest Buffer Panel](#) composed of federal, state, and local government, scientists, land managers, and citizen, farming, development, forest industry, and environmental interests. The Panel represented a wide range of viewpoints and experience and conducted an extensive stakeholder involvement process.
- The Panel was guided by a commitment to develop goals based on sound science, to recommend flexible strategies, to focus on voluntary incentive-based approaches, to increase private and non-profit partnerships, to enhance, streamline, and coordinate existing government programs, to respect private property rights, to be responsive to landowner needs, and to ensure stakeholder involvement.
- The Panel has provided a set of overall goals, recommendations, suggested actions, and technical information that will help guide the conservation and restoration of riparian buffers in the watershed.

Therefore, to Support an Integrated and Comprehensive Approach to the Conservation of Riparian Areas, We:

- Accept [the report](#) of the Riparian Forest Buffer Panel.

- Adopt the proposed [definition of "riparian forest buffer"](#).
- Adopt the following additional Chesapeake Bay Program goals for states and federal agencies:
 - *To assure, to the extent feasible, that all streams and shorelines will be protected by a forested or other riparian buffer.*
 - *To conserve existing forests along all streams and shorelines.*
 - *To increase the use of all riparian buffers and restore riparian forests on 2010 miles of stream and shoreline in the watershed by 2010, targeting efforts where they will be of greatest value to water quality and living resources.*
- Adopt the [five Policy recommendations](#) of the Panel.
- Direct each state and the federal government to establish a riparian buffer implementation plan with conservation and restoration benchmarks addressing the Policy recommendations of the Panel by June 30, 1998.

Maintaining and restoring buffers along all streams and shorelines will not be an easily-achieved goal. Furthermore, reaching these goals will require engaging new partners, energizing the public to plant trees and restore streams, working with farmers, other landowners and local governments, building new relationships with industry and business, and continuing to develop new and innovative approaches and incentives.

By these actions, we reaffirm our commitments made in the [Chesapeake Bay Agreement](#) to restore and protect the ecological integrity, productivity and beneficial uses of the Chesapeake Bay. In recognition of our commitments, we the undersigned agree to further our efforts through the encouragement of voluntary effort to conserve and restore riparian forest buffers throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Date: October 10, 1996

Chesapeake Executive Council

For The United States of America, *Carol M. Browner, Administrator*

For The State of Maryland, *Parris N. Glendening, Governor*

For The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Tom Ridge, Governor*

For The Commonwealth of Virginia, *George Allen, Governor*

For The District of Columbia, *W. David Watts for Marion Barry, Mayor*

For The Chesapeake Bay Commission, *Senator Noah H. Wenger, Chair*

[Return to top of this document](#)

[Return to Home](#)

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